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Senate

The Senate met at 2:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal spirit, You are the "ancient of days," yet the ever new God. Thank You for Your mercy and faithfulness. As the dew refreshes the Earth, so You restore us each day to newness of life.

Sustain our lawmakers today in their labors. Give them guidance and inspiration to focus on issues that truly matter. Give them the wisdom to meet needs, solve problems, and lift burdens. May the talents possessed by the Members of this legislative body help in the awesome task of making the world better. Lord, to those who are given the responsibility of seeking the ways of peace, give creative stamina equal to this difficult task. We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. There will be no rollcall votes today. The time is not divided by the majority or minority; people can come and speak whenever they choose.

I am hopeful today some of the remaining pending amendments to the 9/11 legislation can be disposed of by voice vote. If that is not the case, then 10 amendments remain in order for rollcall votes during tomorrow's session. Under an agreement entered into last week, once we have disposed of those amendments and the substitute, we will proceed to vote on passage of S. 4.

Members are on notice there will be a couple of rollcall votes in the morning prior to the Senate recessing for respective party conferences.

It is my intention to move to proceed to S.J. Res. 9, which is a joint resolution regarding Iraq, and I will file cloture on that motion hopefully tonight, setting up a cloture vote for Wednesday morning.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on January 11, 2 months ago—it seems incredible it has been that long ago, but it has

been—President Bush announced his new war plan, the so-called surge. At that time, administration officials gave the American people the strong impression the President's plan would require the temporary—temporary—deployment of 21,500 new troops in Iraq. During the last several days, news reports confirm this new plan was nothing more than a bait and switch, a new name for an old, failed policy.

First we learned that 21,500 troops cited by the President did not include support in other elements and the true number of additional troops associated with his proposal could have been as many as 40,000 troops. Then, over the weekend, we learned two other troubling facts about the President's plan.

In the wake of continued violence in Iraq that prompted one of our top generals there to call for more troops, the American commander in Iraq, General Petraeus, made it clear still more troops are needed. Even more disconcerting, according to a recent New York Times report:

Military officials in Iraq have indicated they would need a large American troop presence for at least a year and probably for longer to achieve lasting stability.

President Bush is not surging; he is sustaining his failed policy. The consequences of the President's flawed policy in Iraq are staggering. Yesterday, three more American troops were killed. We are fast approaching 3,200 dead Americans. We may be there; last count was 3,195. More than 25,000 now have been wounded. It has stretched our military, it has eroded our veterans health care system, and plunged Iraq deeper and deeper into chaos. No matter how one looks at it, America is less safe today because this President has waged war in Iraq. We must change course, and it is time for the Senate to demand he do it.

Soon, the Senate will again have that opportunity to tell the President to change course. We have been blocked in efforts to have the debate on Iraq.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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